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ABSTRACT

A course putting emphasis on the enjoyment of poetry is presented. It includes an introduction to poetic language and a study of various types of poetry, such as the lyric and the narrative. Performance objectives include: (1) The student will write an original, personal definition of the form of poetry; (2) The student will define a list of terms germane to poetry; (3) The student will identify figures of speech as to type; and (4) The student will write one or more original examples of the figures of speech studied in class. Course content covers authors and poems representing major American and British writers from the romantic period, the transitional period, and the modern era. Black poets are included. (CK)

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AUTHORIZED COURSE OF INSTRUCTION FOR THE QUINMESTER PROGRAM

DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

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5112.154
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ENGLISH

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DIVISION OF INSTRUCTION • 1971

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Written by Marie Mastropaolo
and
Janet Dean
for the
DIVISION OF INSTRUCTION
Dade County Public Schools
Miami, Florida
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CS 200048

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COURSE TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Emphasis is on the enjoyment of poetry. It includes an introduction to poetic language and a study of various types of poetry, such as the lyric and the narrative.

I. PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

A. Given professional definitions of poetry and his own experiences with the genre in this course, the student will write an original, personal definition of the form.

B. Given a list of terms germane to poetry, the student will define them.

C. Given examples of the figures of speech studied in class, the student will identify each as to type.

D. Given examples of figures of speech, (more independent students might be encouraged to provide their own) the student will propose reasons for the effectiveness or the weakness of the figurative language.

E. The student will write one or more original examples of the figures of speech studied in class.

F. The students will compose one or more original poems.

G. The student will compare his views of "the poet" at the beginning of the course with his views at the close of the course.

H. The student will describe his image of "the poet" as it has evolved out of his experiences in the course.

I. The student will discuss reasons why a writer chooses poetry rather than prose as a medium of expression.

J. The student will discuss the poet's role in society.

K. Given a list of American and British authors, the student will read at least one poem by each.

L. Given an outline representing major time periods and literary movements, the student will read at least one selection representative of each.

II. COURSE CONTENT

A. Rationale

In recognition of the correlation between understanding and enjoyment, and to provide a common frame of reference, the student will be made familiar with fundamental terms germane to the study of poetry. The course will attempt to erase stereotyped concepts, especially those concerning the writers of poetry, and to project a positive image of the poet as a person. As a further enhancement of his poetic experience, the student will be provided with opportunities for original creative expression. It is hoped that the student will arrive at some appreciation for Somerset Maugham's assessment of poetry: "The crown of literature is poetry. It is its end and aim. It is the sublimest activity of the human mind. It is the achievement of beauty. The writer of prose can only step aside when the poet passes."

B. Range of subject matter

The authors and poems chosen for study represent major American and British writers from the romantic period; transitional figures such as Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson; Black poets such as Gwendolyn Brooks; and modern poets such as Frost, Sandburg, Ferlinghetti and McKuen.

III. TEACHING STRATEGIES AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

A. As a point of departure, the teacher might consider exposing the students to several professional definitions of poetry. More independent students could be encouraged to research additional definitions and one class meeting could be devoted to a discussion of the definitions compiled. The following definitions should be considered for inclusion in this activity:

1. "I would define the poetry of words as the rhythmical creation of beauty. Its sole arbiter is taste ...unless incidentally, it has no concern whatever either with duty or with truth."

- Edgar Allan Poe

2. "Poetry is the imaginative expression of strong feeling, usually rhythmical...the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquillity."

- William Wordsworth

3. "...the communication of pleasure...the best words in the best order."

- Samuel Taylor Coleridge

4. "...the art of doing by means of words what the painter does by means of colors."

- Macaulay

5. "Poetry...(is) musical thought."

- Carlyle

6. "Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the best and happiest minds."

- Shelley

7. "If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry.

- Emily Dickinson

8. "Poetry is language that tells us through a more or less emotional reaction something that cannot be said."

- E. A. Robinson

As an alternate to this, students might compose their own definitions which they could present for oral or written reaction by their classmates.

B. Recognizing the correlation between understanding and appreciation, the teacher should assign the compilation of a glossary of literary terms germane to poetry. The following list may serve as a suggested point of departure:

1. Principal figures of speech

   a. Figures based on similarity of sound

      (1) Alliteration

      (2) Onomatopoeia

   b. Figures based on similarity of ideas

      (1) Simile

      (2) Metaphor

      (3) Synecdoche

      (4) Personification

      (5) Apostrophe

   c. Miscellaneous figures

      (1) Hyperbole

      (2) Epigram

2. Literary terms

   a. Terms dealing with meter

      (1) Iambic

      (2) Free verse

      (3) Anapestic

      (4) Dactylic

      (5) Monometer

      (6) Dimeter

      (7) Trimeter

      (8) Tetrameter

      (9) Pentameter

      (10) Hexameter

      (11) Heptameter

b. Terms dealing with form

(1) Blank verse

(2) Free verse

(3) Haiku

(4) Ballad

(5) Lyric

(6) Sonnet

(7) Heroic couplet

(8) Quatrain

(9) Cinquain

(10) Limerick

C. To reinforce the student's familiarity with figures of speech, he may be assigned to find one or more examples of each of the types studied from poems not discussed in class.

D. To help students gain experience in evaluating figurative language, the teacher might conduct class discussions based upon famous figures, such as Sandburg's metaphor in "Fog." Why might the author have chosen this particular comparison? Is it appropriate? Why? How many points of similarity can you suggest between the fog and the cat? (Its suddenness of appearance and disappearance, its independence, the air of mystery, etc.)

E. To emphasize the importance of freshness and originality, the teacher should suggest examples of figures of speech that were initially excellent and, by reason of this excellence, have diminished in effectiveness, becoming trite through over-use. For example, "He looked like death warmed over." As reinforcement, the class can then be encouraged to add their own suggestions to this list of "Tired Figures That Should Be Retired."

F. As an activity leading to original creative expression, students should be helped toward a greater awareness of sensory perceptions. For example, the teacher might consider assignments such as:

1. Write a brief description of a sound or sounds that you are aware of as you first awaken in the morning.

2. Write a paragraph describing a sight or sights you observe on your route to school.

3. The teacher may ask students to exchange papers for constructive reactions or put brief descriptions on the chalkboard for cooperative efforts in increasing effectiveness of expression through use of colorful and explicit nouns, adjectives and verbs.

G. Ask students to think of themselves as a fictional character in a novel they have read and to try to experience that character's emotions. Then assign the students to write a poem expressing their own feelings as that character.

H. Another activity in preparation for the writing of original poems is the composition of images through original figures of speech. As an introduction to this activity, the teacher might consider the use of currently popular songs that are rich in imagery, such as "My Favorite Things" (from The Sound of Music) and "If It Fits Your Fancy" (from The Two Sides of the Smothers Brothers).

I. In preparing students to write original verse, the teacher should introduce them to poems that point out that the material for poetry is within the realm of their own experiences. The following are examples of poets who find beauty in the commonplace:

1. Carl Sandburg - "Fog"

2. Walt Whitman - "Miracles"

3. William Carlos Williams - "The Red Wheelbarrow"

4. Rupert Brooke - "The Great Lover"

J. The teacher may initiate a discussion of the student's image of the poet as a person by having each member of the class write a brief description of what he conceives a poet to be.

K. The teacher may wish to assign these student-written descriptions of "The Poet" at the beginning of the course and repeat the assignment at the close of the course, for purposes of comparison.

L. To create a positive image of the poet as a person, the teacher might lead a discussion designed to reveal student prejudices concerning poets. After creation of a verbal composite of the poet based on this discussion, the teacher can dispel the stereotyped with a drawing of Don Marquis' Archy the Cockroach. Numerous interesting parallels between this ancient creature and the poet are suggested in the article by Mary Jo Powell entitled "War on Poetry - Phobia," English Journal, October, 1966, p. 887.

M. To lead to an understanding of poetry as a mode of verbal expression the teacher might engage the class in a discussion comparing and contrasting poetry with prose. Some students might suggest that a poem is an "extended or elaborate" way of expressing an idea. One activity helpful in demonstrating economy of expression as a characteristic of poetry is to assign students to write a prose paraphrase of poem such as Vachel Lindsay's "The Leaden Eyed." (The straightforward diction of such a selection is also helpful in dispelling the myth that the language of poetry is necessarily "flowery.")

N. To demonstrate the importance of word arrangement as well as word choice in effective poetic expression, the teacher may choose a famous line which employs few or no unusual words, scramble the words, and present them as a list on the blackboard. Students can then be challenged to rearrange the words and identify the line.

O. An activity helpful in demonstrating changes which have taken place in poetic diction is to provide students with word lists, each representing words chosen from a poet representative of a particular period or style. Works by the following poets lend themselves well to this type of comparative analysis: Milton, Wordsworth, Whitman, Frost, Sandburg. (Inclusion of Whitman affords an opportunity to demonstrate Whitman's role as a transitional figure who anticipates and influences the modern poet such as Sandburg in both diction and subject matter.)

P. To help initiate or to supplement a discussion of the "why" of poetic expression, the teacher may assign the reading of John Ciardi's discussion of the "Spieltrieb" (play impulse) in poetry, in How Does a Poem Mean? pp. 669-670. (Ciardi makes the point that the poet chooses to impose the restrictions of poetic conventions upon himself in response to man's desire to "make things hard for the fun of it." He draws an analogy between the poetic play-impulse and other games and activities in which man purposefully imposes rules or creates obstacles for the fun involved in the challenge of overcoming them.)

Q. As Ciardi suggests in How Does a Poem Mean?, an analysis of Robert Frost's composition of "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" is a good choice for illustrating the "Spieltrieb."

R. Advanced and interested students may be encouraged to investigate ideas concerning the role and the image of the poet in society. As well as examining views of the modern protest poets such as Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti, the student might be directed to Matthew Arnold's ideas as he expresses them, for example, in his poem "Resignation" and in his essays on criticism, or to William Cullen Bryant's image of the poet as he expresses it in "I Broke the Spell..."

S. The student should keep a reading log of poems read outside of class. The log should reflect a variety of authors representing different literary periods and movements. Each entry should include the title, the author, and a brief summary of the central thought and/or a statement of the literary significance of the selection read.

T. Have students "become" a poem of their choice. Encourage them to develop a unique presentation of their selection so that the other members of the class may experience it fully also.

U. Show students a film such as Hailstones and Halibut Bones. Have them express their feelings about the colors mentioned in the poem. In addition, they might select another theme, idea, or object and compose a "mud is..." poem.

V. Show students a variety of nonverbal stimulus films such as those suggested below. Some of these may be viewed as poetic expression in themselves. Provide time for students to react to the stimulus film shown. Such a film may provide the basis for student expression via an original poem.

1. Clay - Origin of the Species
2. Dot and the Line: A Romance in Lower Mathematics
3. The Hand
4. Junkyard
5. Neighbors

6. Pigs!

7. A Place in the Sun

8. Psychedelic Wet

9. A Short Vision

10. Ski the Outer Limits

11. Wheels, Wheels, Wheels

W. Arrange for a poetry reading session. Blacklight, a celestial light, or candles may add to the atmosphere. Have students present a favorite poem. They may wish to enhance their reading by supplying a musical background, by showing pictures on an opaque, by giving a slide-tape presentation, or by using a film they have made for the occasion.

X. Have students read Whitman's "Leaves of Grass." Show them An American Time Capsule and have them write a comparison and/or contrast paper.

IV. STUDENT RESOURCES

A. State-adopted texts

Arvin, Newton, et. al. Major Writers of America: Shorter Edition.

Barrows, et. al. American Experience: Poetry.

Barrows, et. al. English Tradition: Poetry.

Bate, et. al. Major British Writers: Shorter Edition.

Connollay, et. al. Adventures in Reading.

Early, et. al. Adventures in American Literature.

Inglis, Rewey Belle, et. al. Adventures in World Literature.

McCormick, Paul, et. al. Adventures in English Literature.

Perrine, et. al. Adventures in Appreciation.

Peterson, R. Stanley. Designs in Poetry.

Pooley, Robert C., et. al. England in Literature.

Pooley, Robert C., et. al. United States in Literature.

Steinberg, et. al. Insight: Experience of Literature.

Pooley, et. al. Exploring Life through Literature.

Pettit. Poems to Remember.

Corbin. Currents in Poetry.

Carlsen, et. al. Themes and Writers Series.

Perception: Themes in Literature

Insights: Themes in Literature

Encounters: Themes in Literature

American Literature: Themes & Writers

Western Literature: Themes & Writers

Pooley, et. al. Outlooks through Literature

Pooley, et. al. Counterpoint in Literature.

Iverson. Prose and Poetry Adventures.

Maline. Studies in Poetry.

Maline. Narrative and Lyric Poetry.

Maline. Modern Drama, Poetry and Essays.

Maline. Poets and Critics.

Smiley, et. al. Creatures in Verse.

Pooley, et. al. Vanguard, Revised.

Pooley, et. al. Perspectives.

Pooley, et. al. Accent: USA

Hook. Writing Creatively.

B. Non-state-adopted supplementary materials

Adoff, Arnold, et. al. I Am the Darker Brother. New York: Macmillan, 1968.

Anderson, Charles R. Emily Dickinson's Poetry. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966.

Brooks, Gwendolyn. Selected Poems. New York: Harper and Row, 1947.

Culler, A. Dwight, ed. Poetry and Criticism of Matthew Arnold. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961.

Davidson, Edward H., ed. Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1956.

Engle, Paul and Carrier, Warren. Reading Modern Poetry. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1955.

Ferlinghetti, Lawrence. A Coney Island of the Mind. New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1958.

Foster, H. Lincoln. Contemporary American Poetry. New York: Macmillan Company, 1963.

Frost, Robert. Complete Poems of Robert Frost. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1949.

Marquis, Don. archy's life of mehitabel. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966.

McKuen, Rod. Caught in the Quiet. New York: Random House, Inc., 1970.

McKuen, Rod. In Someone's Shadow. New York: Random House, Inc., 1969.

Miller, James E., Jr., ed. Complete Poetry and Selected Prose by Walt Whitman. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959.

Perrine, Lawrence. Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1969.

Whicher, Stephen and Ahnebrink, eds. Twelve American Poets. New York: Oxford University Press, 1961.

Zweigler, Joy. Man in the Poetic Mode, 1-6. Evanston, Illinois: McDougal, Littell & Company, 1970.

Smiley, Marjorie B., et al. People in Poetry. New York: Macmillan, 1969.

Boynton, Robert and Mack, Maynard. Introduction to the Poem. New York: Hayden Book Company, 1965.

V. TEACHER RESOURCES

Brooks, Cleanth. The Well-Wrought Urn. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1947.

Ciardi, John. How Does a Poem Mean? Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959.

Coffin, LaVerne W. "Writing Song Lyrics." English Journal. Volume 59, Number 7, October, 1970.

English, Helen W. "Rock Poetry, Relevance and Revelation." English Journal. Volume 59, Number 8, November, 1970.

Janeczko, Paul B. and Skapura. "Poetry Is Alive and Well: A Working Blueprint." English Journal. Volume 59, Number 8, November, 1970.

Powell, Mary-Jo. "War on Poetry-Phobia." English Journal. Volume 59, October, 1966.

Thrall, William Flint. Hibbard, Addison. Holman, C. Hugh. A Handbook to Literature. New York: Odyssey Press, 1960.

Taaffe, James and Lincks, John. Reading English Poetry. New York: The Free Press, 1971.

Rollins, Charlemae. Famous American Negro Poets. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1965.

Hughes, Langston, ed. New Negro Poets U. S. A. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1968.

VI. AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

A. Filmstrips

How to Read and Understand Poetry. E.A.V. Inc., Pleasantville, New York. 2 filmstrips and 2 records.

Part 1 - "Poetry: Its Content"
Part 2 - "Poetry: Its Form"
Part 3 - "Interpretation: Reading and Meaning"
Part 4 - "The Interpretation of a Poem"

Images and Imagination: Seeing Creatively. Eye Gate House, Inc., Jamaica, New York, 1968. 2 records and 4 filmstrips.

A. The Picture Window
B. The Strange Country
C. Sidewalks
D. Reflections of New York.

The Poetic Experience. Guidance Associates. Harcourt, Brace and World. 2 filmstrips and 2 records.

The set is organized into two parts: Part I: "What Is Poetry" and Part II: "A Closer Look."

Understanding Poetry. McGraw Hill. 10 filmstrips.

The set includes two strips on rhythm, two on figures of speech and one each on forms, meaning and sound effects.

B. Films

Carl Sandburg. EBEC, 30 min. B & W.	1-30992
Carl Sandburg Discusses His Work. 30 min.	1-12473
The Raven. 12 min.	1-05554
W. B. Yeats: A Tribute. 23 min.	1-11815
Hailstones and Habibut Bones. 6 min.	1-04499
Walt Whitman: Background for His Works. 14 min.	1-11805
Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass. 21 min.	1-12504
John Greenleaf Whittier. 20 min.	1-12485
The Wordsworth Country. 23 min.	1-11817
An American Time Capsule.	1-01742
Clay - Origin of the Species.	1-05800
Dot and the Line: A Romance in Lower Mathematics.	1-05833
The Hand.	1-13819
Junkyard.	1-05864
Neighbors.	1-05861
Pigs!	1-14011
A Place in the Sun.	1-05840
Psychedelic Wet.	1-00193
A Short Vision.	1-00702
Ski the Outer Limits.	1-30929
Wheels, Wheels, Wheels.	1-04859
What Is Poetry?	1-05615

C. Records

The Caedmon Treasury of Modern Poets Reading Their Own Poetry. Caedmon. 2 - 12 in. 33-1/3.

"If It Fits Your Fancy." The Two Sides of the Smothers Brothers. 33-1/3 Mercury Record Corporation.

Listen to the Warm: Rod McKuen. R. C. A. Victor. 33-1/3.

"My Favorite Things." The Sound of Music. 33-1/3, R. C. A. Victor.

Robert Frost Reads His Poetry. Caedmon. 33-1/3.

Rod McKuen at Carnegie Hall. Warner Bros. - Seven Arts Records, Inc., 2 record sets, 33-1/3.

Annabel Lee. 10" 2s, 78 rpm. 4-30188

Appreciation of Poetry. 10" 12s, 78 rpm. 4-00001

The Audio Book of Famous Poems. 7" 8s, 16 rpm. 4-00058

Complete Sonnets of William Shakespeare. 7" 6s, 16 rpm 4-00066

T. S. Eliot: Reading Poems and Choruses. 12" 2s, 33-1/3 rpm 4-40066

Great Talks and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe. 7" 8s, 16 rpm. 4-00057

Great Themes in Poetry. 10" 12s, 78 rpm. 4-00002

Poetic Selections: Poems of Carl Sandburg. 12" 2s, 33-1/3 rpm. 4-40534

Poetic Selections: Poems of Robert Frost. 12" 2s, 33-1/3 rpm. 4-40533

Poetry of Browning. 12" 2s, 33-1/3 rpm. 4-40059

Prose and Poetry for Adventure, Album 2. 12" 4s, 33-1/3 rpm. 4-00035

Prose and Poetry for Appreciation, Album 4. 12" 4s, 33-1/3 rpm. 4-00037

Prose and Poetry for Enjoyment, Album 3.
12" 4s, 33-1/3 rpm. 4-00036

Prose and Poetry for Journeys, Album 1.
12" 4s, 33-1/3 rpm. 4-00034

Prose and Poetry of America, Album 5.
12" 4s, 33-1/3 rpm. 4-00038

Prose and Poetry of England, Album 6.
12" 4s, 33-1/3 rpm. 4-00039

VII. AUTHORS AND WORKS SUGGESTED FOR STUDY

Arnold, Matthew - "Resignation"

Brooke, Rupert - "The Great Lover"

Bryant, William Cullen - "I Broke the Spell that Held Me Long"

Cummings, E. E.- "buffalo bill"

Ferlinghetti, Lawrence - "No. 15" ("Constantly risking absurdity...")

Frost, Robert

"Stopping by Woods..."
"Birches"
"Mending Wall"
"The Death of the Hired Man"

Hughes, Langston - "Dream Deferred"

Lindsay, Vachel - "The Leaden Eyed"

Marquis, Don - "Freddy the Rat Perishes"

Milton, John

"L'Allegro"
"Il Penseroso"

Sandburg, Carl

"Fog"
"Chicago"

Whitman, Walt

"Miracles"
"A Noiseless Patient Spider"

Williams, William Carlos - "The Red Wheelbarrow"

Wordsworth, William

"Daffodils"
"Ode on Intimations of Immortality"